

FFWPU USA: Chicago Family Church's New Sunday School Program Unites

Naokimi Ushiroda
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Photos courtesy of the Chicago Family Church

A new Sunday school program, amid renovations to the Chicago Family Church building, recently began for all Unificationist youth from first grade through high school. "We've aimed to improve our building to meet, in particular, the needs of our young families and children," said Rev. David Rendel in a report to FFWPU USA leaders on Sept. 13. "We have a goal of becoming a model church in America, and we're moving forward very quickly with that."



Rev. Rendel outlined phases of the renovation project, which is being led by Rev. Kazuo Takami, FFWPU USA Midwest regional director. He said the construction work has brought the community together, with many young people now more involved and invested. "The result has been fantastic," said Rev. Rendel, describing a cross-generational crew of volunteers separated into two teams. "We've been doing a lot of demolition, expanding rooms and making new classrooms by taking down walls to extend offices," he said.

Four years ago, in Sept. 2018, the Chicago community acquired a modern 20,000 square-foot building in Schaumburg as their [new church facility](#) after an extensive search. The building, which is located 30 miles northwest of Chicago, is in the heart of where many Unificationists live. Rev. Rendel said the renovation project spurred a community-wide prayer condition for its success. "One of our prayer points is that we can all contribute to God's providence in a special way during this time," he said.

Community support quickly ballooned, as crews got to work remodeling Sunday school classrooms and establishing a designated 'toddler zone.' "So many of the young moms in our community are engaged now," said Rev. Rendel. "Six or seven of them with young kids are coming out to get involved, and it's amazing ... One of them is an interior designer, so the moms are coming up with their own design for the toddler room."



Rev. Rendel said they anticipate moving into the new space by the end of October. For now, with Sunday school underway, the focus has been on the spiritual development and connection of the youth. "The elementary teachers' meeting [earlier this month] was full of our high school kids who wanted to become Sunday school teachers," he said. "The engagement has been really fantastic."

The new Sunday school program now features four core staff, and 24 teachers and assistants - 18 of which are young Unificationists, and six are community elders. "This is a big step for us in Chicago," said Rev. Rendel. "We have never been quite this organized with our Sunday school program. I think we're off to a really great start, and we're eager to keep going."



Unificationist leaders were inspired by the steady progress in Chicago. "It's really great to see not just the renovation, but how Chicago is really engaging the community members to really be part of making that a reality and naturally bringing the community closer together," said Rev. Naokimi Ushiroda, FFWPU USA president. "This gives them a sense of pride and ownership - and a great foundation for the growth and development of their church."

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News

USA: Chicago Family Church Acquires Beautiful New Home

SEP 2, 2018



Prepared by FFWPU USA

After years of extensive search for a new church facility, the Chicago Family Church community has finally purchased a modern 20,000 square foot building in May 2018 for use in worship programs, weekday activities, conferences and community care. The new facility is located in Schaumburg, Illinois, 30 miles northwest of Chicago in the center of a geographical area where many Unificationists live.

From 1983 to 2012, the Chicago community owned a beautiful two-story brick building in Rodgers Park near Lake Michigan which was sold in 2015 due to many Unificationist families moving to the

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northwest suburbs. In 2010, the community began to seriously consider relocating, however, many Unificationists were opposed to selling the Rodgers Park property due to historical and sentimental values. Chicago Family Church Pastor Rev. Kunihiro Sagisaka said, “True Parents came to visit us many times and many historical events were held at this building...many Unificationists had so much emotional attachment.”

Through a series of community town hall meetings with discussion about current and future facility needs, support for the sale of the Rodgers Park property gradually increased. With much deliberation and through a majority vote, the decision to sell was confirmed in 2014 and the property was officially sold in 2015.

At the end of 2017, the community finally found a new facility that fit all the guidelines and criteria they were looking for. The interior design includes a grand sanctuary area, spacious multi-purpose room, several large meeting rooms, café space for casual gathering, and a beautiful field behind the building. The community also intends to rent out space within the facility to other local churches and nonprofit organizations as a means to generate revenue.

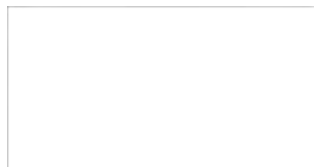
Throughout the long process of the sale of the Rogers Park property, to selecting and approving a new facility, to purchasing the Schaumburg building, the Chicago community members have been closely involved in all aspects. In a survey sent to all members, a 92% approval rating was received in support of purchasing the new facility. Financial support is also being received from the community with \$120,000 already generated out of a goal of \$250,000.

“Although we have just scratched the surface, it is clear that our new church facility holds a bright future! It has greater potential than anything we have ever had before, is more inviting for members, and more conveniently located. Our Chicago family members are much happier now that we have found a permanent home.” –Patricia Fliginger

“We’re only a few weeks into our official use, and the building already has a strong foundation! It is proving to be more than enough to serve the needs of our community.” –Eugene Avila

Plans are being finalized for renovation of the facility with a creative design to optimize its multipurpose use. The community could use any additional financial support to complete this process.

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